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Suoyant nature could not long be held down by the pressure of calamity.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NEW PUPIL.

"I HAVE a new pupil for you; and she is such an odd little thing!"

This was Miss Blount's introduction to a graphic and detailed account of her brother Wyndham's adventure, and the result, an addition to the members of her mother's family.

"Only think of Wyndham having a ward!" she added, when her narration was finished.

"And an heiress, too!" put in Ruhama.

"Who knows but it will end in the usual manner of romances, with ward and guardian falling in love with each other!"

"I thought you said Miss Sterns was a child?" remarked Olive.

"Only fifteen; but wonderfully precocious! And so fond of her own way! She always manages to get it, too, somehow!"

"Has she taste for music?"

"A perfect passion! Is always playing and singing, but lacks cultivation, of course. My brother says he wants her to have all the culture necessary, to develop what talent she may possess."

"You know, Emily, I am not capable of being a scientific teacher; that is, of the highest grade."

"Hardly any private teacher can be expected to do that. But you will try her, Olive?"

"I will do my best, and thank you for the addition to my list."

"Thanks for nothing, Olive, dear!" cried Ruhama. "Who should we think of, but you, and be happy that we can contribute a little to your success?"

"Not a little, dear friend; I owe my best pupils to your kindness!"

"Now, have done with such talk! Kindness, forsooth! If I had a fortune of my own, who should share it but my dearest Olive?"

Miss Weston turned away her face to hide the tears that sprung to her eyes.

"But we have a favor to ask," said Emily. "We are going to have a drawing-room concert at Mrs. Moore's splendid rooms, in aid of the Orphan's Home. There is to be music and recitation. Will you help us?"

"I?" repeated Olive, looking up in surprise.

"Why not, dear?" answered Miss Blount.

"It is not a party. You have such an exquisite taste; and we want you to lead the chorus in the music that is to accompany the readings. The chorus will be in the third parlor."

"I cannot possibly come."

"It will oblige us immensely, and do good. You were always willing to lend a helping hand, dear friend."

"But I cannot leave my mother. No—not even for one evening."

"She is not worse, I hope?"

"She is failing from day to day."

The girl's voice was lost in the sob she strove to repress.

"Then you shall not be urged," cried Ruhama, going to her and kissing her cheeks.

"We shall have the aid of the new musical lion, you know, Emily," she said, looking archly at Miss Blount. "You shall not distract Olive. The foreign gentleman, you know. Was he introduced to you last evening at Mrs. Bogart's?"

"No; I did not see him except at a distance; I did not even hear his name."

"The Count del Raggio, or something like that. He is very handsome, and they say, is of a distinguished family in Italy. Dear Italy! how I love all who are born in that charming country!"

"There I cannot agree with you, Ruhama. I do not admire old Antonio, for instance."

"Oh, the hideous juggler! No, no; I meant such Italians as the count."

"Or any sunburned individual with plenty of whiskers, and stiletto-looking eyes, who can look lofty, and talk gibberish when he is in a rage."

"You could not help calling the count handsome, if you had noticed him, Emily. And, as to his gibberish, you should have heard him sing that Italian bravura after you were gone. It was exquisite; and they say he composed it himself."

"He is a musician, too?"

"Of course. Olive, dear, I shall bring him to see you one of these days, on purpose to let you hear him. You will receive him in a professional manner."

And she went on to give an account of the stranger.

The handsome stranger, with his Italian name and his acknowledged genius, had already become the admiration of all the ladies in the most fashionable circles of the metropolis.

He was so reserved and stately, yet so willing to oblige by playing the airs he had composed, and accompanying the piano or guitar with his magnificent voice!

Then there was something of mystery about him. He seemed melancholy and abstracted at times, and frequently did not answer when addressed.

He had brought letters, Ruhama added, that were sufficient vouchers for his respectability; yet it was but seldom he could be induced to go into society. Whenever he did, he sought no introductions, often declining them; though with a graceful courtesy that could not possibly give offence. He had willingly consented, however, to lend his aid to a charity entertainment.

They were interrupted by a knock at the outside door.

Olive went and opened it. A slender, youth-

Once more among the meadows green
I walk, but do not walk alone;
A quiet radiance broods over the scene
With splendor that is all its own.
I see the dew-drops on the grass,
Flash out like stars when south winds pass.
The birds that sung the whole day through
With merry song that echoed far
Beneath the arch of Heaven's clear blue,
Landed on the blossoms they were near.
For, if their hearts were glad as mine,
Their songs would make the night divine.
The moonlight lays its silver cloak
Across the blossoming olivey fields,
And dallies with the scarlet stars
For the sweet odors that they yield.
Oh, blossoms sweet! but not by far
So sweet as love's young blossoms are!

What strange, mute sweetness in the air,
As if no sounds could make it known.
What tender memories linger, where
Love and a night like this was known.
Oh, happy, happy time gone by!
Your memory thrills me like a sigh.
Here grew pale blossoms in the shade,
More sweet than those in summer spots,
Hid in the grass, as if afraid
To seek or wish for brighter lots;
Sweet blossoms that we sought and found
In soft green leaves against the ground.
We saw the emerald wheat-fields smile
In generous promise to the sky,
And the golden stalks talking while,
As winds and leaves loitered by.
The promise of the wheat and maize
Was like our own for future days.

This old brown rock, with dots of moss
Against its rough, uneven side,
And threads of moonlight woven across,
Is where I whispered first, "My bride!
My own to love, my own to hold,
While life shall last, and years grow old."
Oh, heart of youth! When first you speak
To us all young hearts must know,
Although you words are few and weak,
What meaning, deep, intense, you know.
A prelude of the holiest rest.
That comes to any mortal breast.
Now, thinking of the long ago,
That summer seems a dream-heard song,
Across the ceaseless rise and flow,
As drifts the passing years along.
An echo from some far-off shore—
An echo sweet, and nothing more.

Love in a Maze: OR, THE DEBUTANTE'S DISENCHANTMENT.

BY MRS. E. F. ELLET,
AUTHOR OF "ALIDA BARRETT, THE SEWING
GIRL," "MADELINE'S MARRIAGE," ETC.

CHAPTER VI.—CONTINUED.

WYNDHAM hurried down, stepping from one granite mass to another, and clinging to the trees as he descended. It was a rough descent and full of risk; but he soon reached the ledge, and crept along to the spot where the girl sat. She laughed in her joy at seeing him.

"You were wrong to come here, Elodie," he said, gravely.

"Oh, I know it, Mr. Wyndham; but I came up on that side; see, and I thought I could get back the same way. So I could, but the great stone that was poised there fell, after I had crossed it."

The young man shuddered as he looked.

The boulder had been dislodged, even by the girl's light touch, and had left a sheer descent only a bird could pass over.

"We can go the way you came," the girl said.

"Impossible! I could scarcely keep my footing, holding by the saplings with both hands. You could not go alone, especially in this wind; and the steps are too narrow for me to help you."

"Then can we get down to the beach?"

"Not unless a miracle should interpose to help us."

"What are we to do, then?"

The girl laughed a little as she asked the question, looking frankly into Wyndham's face.

She was very young; certainly not more than fifteen, if so much. Her hair, like a fluff of pale gold, in the wildest disorder, framed an oval face, fresh and bright as a rose. The eyes were blue, open and fearless in their confiding expression; the mouth was small and pouting; the pink chin was daintily rounded. It was a sweet, childish face, and Wyndham thought he had never seen anything so lovely.

In answer to her question he took off his coat and put it on her. She made some resistance, on account of the danger of his feeling the cold; but he paid no heed to her.

"You have lost your scarf," he said. "You must wear this. What are we to do? wait for a boat from the vessel out there? The men can't bring up a rope."

"But they cannot see us. The vessel is anchored behind that point."

"Can she get in there?"

"Certainly; there is quite a bay; sheltered, too, by the rocks on each side."

"Then some of them will go up; and we must call to them."

"The wind blows so fiercely I am afraid they cannot hear!"

Wyndham shouted with all his might, but only the shrieking blast answered.

"And the storm is coming on worse!" he wailed. "Tell me, does the tide rise as high as this?"

Elodie burst into a ripple of musical merriment.

"You might know it does not," she replied.

"Look at those weeds strewn like ropes below there. That is high-water mark."



"Turn on me, if you like—you cannot hurt me! I'm not afraid of you."

But, even as she spoke, a mountainous boulder, hurled against the cliff with terrible force, covered the platform and them with spray! The young man shivered as he tried to screen Elodie; but she did not seem to heed the boulder. There was good foothold part of the way; and only a few feet here and there where he had to depend on the rope. But the heavy waves hurled themselves upon the pair more and more furiously as they went down. Wyndham kept his arm clasped about Elodie, telling her not to loosen her hold for an instant. They stood on the shore, but they had not a moment to lose. They fled swiftly along the way pointed out by the girl, who caught her breath convulsively as the greedy waters dashed over her. At last they were out of danger, in the path that led upward through a ravine partly cleared. The men, with torches, had come to meet them. "This is bad enough," she said; "and it will be worse presently, for the daylight is leaving us! Would it not be wise to attempt an escape, even if we risk something? If it gets dark we cannot move!" "I will not peril your life! If you can stay here alone, Elodie, while I try to scramble up—" "Don't leave me, please!" cried the poor girl. "Let me go with you!" "You could not pass where I did to come here! I could manage to get over it, though the return is more difficult." "Then you must not go. If we could let ourselves down." "With a rope, tied round this rock above us, we might venture, and it would be safe. But nothing can be done without a rope." "Then must we stay here?" "Till help comes. I see no other way. If we cannot get off to-night, I will watch you. Elodie, while you sleep." "My poor aunt! how she will fret after me!" murmured the girl, weeping softly. "How foolish I was to come here!" It was rapidly growing dusk. The masses of clouds driven up into the sky obscured the sunlight, and the roar of the seething waters below seemed more terrible than ever. The young man tried to soothe the girl's self-reproachful grief. He shouted for help at intervals; and at last the welcome gleam of a lantern was seen moving far above. Their cry for help was answered by a cheer. Two or three men could be seen. In a short time they lowered a rope; but it fell so far out it could not be grasped. Lowered on the other side it fell beyond the boulder that had slipped down. "Let it down entirely, from the other side!" shouted Wyndham, and in a few moments he was obeyed. The rope had been made fast above, he called to them to loosen it, and send the boat to meet them at the beach. Presently the rope, which he firmly grasped, was let down, and he caught it. He made it fast around the imbedded rock, and prepared to descend. The waves were breaking furiously at their feet, and at intervals covering them with spray. They came to the house. There was light in all the rooms. A dark form stood in the doorway. "Oh, Miss Elodie! Miss Elodie! where have you been all this time?" The girl clutched the black woman's arm. "Is she alive? Or have I killed her with my folly?" she gasped, white as death. "Oh, honey! don't take on so! She's alive! An' she hain't fretted none for you; she was peepin' all the way." "And I heard that his wife was took for you," observed another of the men. "Sobs came from the poor girl they were carrying, and she bade them let her down and she would walk. They could get on faster. She faced her uncle, and dashed the tears from her eyes. "You shall not go in there!" he said, sternly. "What's to hinder me? Letty, I say! Why don't you speak?" "Oh, master!" exclaimed the negress, "be silent now! She'll never hear you, nor speak to you no more! never, no more!" "What d'ye mean?" he cried, turning upon her. She had Elodie in her arms, and was taking her into another room. At the sound of the inebriated man's voice the girl stood up, faced her uncle, and dashed the tears from her eyes. "She means, sir, that my darling aunt is free at last!" she cried, defiantly. "You can't scold her any more. Turn on me, if you like; you cannot hurt me! I'm not afraid of you," she strove to say. "And who are you, ye imp of Satan, and how dare you speak so to me, whose bread we've been eatin'?" Tramp—out of my house!" "She shall leave your house to-night," interposed Wyndham, angrily. "Elodie, change your dress, and let me take you to the inn. The nurse shall go with you!" "Oh, we cannot leave my darling aunt! We must watch with her, and dress her for the funeral. When she is buried I will leave your house, Mr. Rashleigh, and you shall never see me again. Come, Nelly, help me to get ready." She passed out of the room with the colored woman. Rashleigh, whose drunken perceptions had now taken in the fact that his wife was dead, looked after her sullenly and bewilfully. "And who are you, ye imp of Satan, and how dare you speak so to me, whose bread we've been eatin'?" he asked. "I shall take her to my mother's house," replied Wyndham. "Her aunt gave her into my charge with her last breath, and I accepted the trust." But Elodie refused to leave the house while her aunt lay dead within it; and Wyndham persuaded one of the female neighbors to take charge of her. "Where is the hussy going?" he asked. "I shall take her to my mother's house," replied Wyndham. "Her aunt gave her into my charge with her last breath, and I accepted the trust." But Elodie refused to leave the house while her aunt lay dead within it; and Wyndham persuaded one of the female neighbors to take charge of her. "I promise—" he said, solemnly—"I swear—to be faithful to the charge you gave me." The dying woman understood him, and smiled. She strove to lift up her head, and to articulate a word; but her strength failed. She

ful form stood there, but the face was covered with a thick veil.

The young hostess hesitated. It was a stranger; and she did not like to ask in visitors she did not know.

The young girl inquired if Miss Blount was there. Before Olive could reply, Emily, who had heard and recognized the voice, ran out and confronted the new-comer.

"You naughty child!" she exclaimed, with laughter struggling in her reproving tone. "Did I not tell you you must not come with us? And how did you find the way?"

The girl had thrown back her veil, and Olive was struck with her singular face.

Her profusion of pale gold hair, rippling across her forehead, hung in masses, like floss silk, on either side her fresh, rose-tinted cheeks. She had the brightest violet eyes in the world, just now flashing with something like defiance.

"I know that you told me not to come, Miss Emily," she replied. "But I knew you were coming to see about my music lessons, and I wanted to see the teacher before you made any arrangement."

"And you followed us all the way, by yourself?"

"I did not follow you; I knew the address, and I came in the cars, part of the way."

"After you had been forbidden to go out alone?"

"You should not have forbidden me," retorted the girl. "I am not used to obeying orders."

"You will come in?" asked Olive.

"Oh, yes, you may as well," added Miss Blount, taking the girl's arm and leading her into the little parlor. "Olive, I am sorry the first introduction to you of your pupil should be in this wise; but you must excuse impatience in a wayward child."

"I am not a child," the girl murmured; but Olive kindly took her hand, and said:

"I am glad of the opportunity of knowing the young lady; and I trust we shall get along comfortably in our new relations, if it pleases her that we enter upon them."

These words soothed the ruffled self-esteem of the girl; she smiled brightly, and took the seat offered her.

Then with the courteous kindness that always marked her manner, Olive asked questions about her previous lessons, and her tastes in the art.

"Perhaps you would like to hear her play a little?" asked Emily.

At the request of Miss Weston, Elodie took off her gloves, removed the shawl that covered her shoulders, and seated herself at the piano.

She struck the keys with a bold touch and played an air from Norma. It was a difficult one for a young performer, and she was inaccurate in several notes; but on the whole she had a brilliant execution.

Her passion for the art asserted itself. At the more startling turns, her face seemed to kindle. She looked up like an inspired creature; she seemed to forget the presence of those about her.

Emily was impatient at the blunders she made, and Ruhama laughed; but Olive listened attentively, smiled, and warmly applauded her at the close.

"You have manifest talent," she said.

"But sadly needing culture," observed the other two ladies.

"Where there is real genius," answered Olive, "it will not take long to triumph over obstacles caused by inexperience. I can see that she will outstrip me, and that before a great while."

Elodie started up, came hastily to her and impulsively threw her arms round her neck.

"I shall be glad," she said, "to have you for my teacher."

Ruhama gave another of her musical ripples of merriment.

"Nothing wins the heart like praise."

"We all know that appreciation is pleasant," was Olive's reply; and the young girl gave her a grateful look, while her color rose perceptibly.

"Would you like to hear me sing?" she asked.

"Very much indeed."

Again Elodie seated herself at the piano; and after a low prelude, dashed into a wild and stirring song. Like her playing, it was full of faults, but of spirit as well. She mastered the trills admirably.

Her gentle instructor was convinced she would have a powerful though erratic genius committed to her training.

She kept silence, buried in thought, when the song was ended. Elodie's eyes were riveted on her face.

"Emily," said Olive, at length, "this young lady would do credit to a better teacher than myself."

"She could not have one so patient with her faults. You see, she needs to go over the elementary studies, to learn to overcome her inaccuracies."

"She will soon conquer those; and then she will soar far above me," said Olive, with a smile.

"And I will have you, and nobody but you, to teach me!" cried Elodie.

"You really must undertake her," said Miss Blount. "Only do not spoil her; she is too conceited already."

"I think I can correct the faults she has; and when I have done all I can, she can be ready for a scientific professor."

"Keep her in leading-strings as long as you can," whispered Emily. "Your gentleness and general culture, if you can impart them, will do her good. My brother was wishing she were like you."

Olive's pale cheek colored slightly. She glanced at Ruhama.

"You would say," cried the lively blonde, "that Mr. Blount ought to prefer me for a model!"

It was Olive's thought, though she had not expressed it.

"Oh, no, my dear! Mr. Blount may admire me; but he wants his ward to be graver and more steady. He would not have her doing a bit of flirtation for the world!"

The tinkling of a small bell was heard.

"You will excuse me," said Olive. "I must go to my mother."

"And we must go home," said Miss Blount. "We shall bring Elodie to you three times a week, beginning to-morrow."

The adieux were made, and the three ladies went out to the carriage.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHARITY CONCERT.

The charity concert was a social party as well; dancing being added to the attractions of the evening.

The house was a large double one on Park avenue, and was furnished with splendor.

In addition to the spacious parlors, a room was extended in the rear, of immense size, lofty, and lighted from above; the windows opening to the sky and richly colored. The ceiling was frescoed, the walls were covered with choice paintings, and the floor was inlaid

with many-colored woods, and polished like a mirror.

It had always been used as a music-room, and a platform was raised and carpeted for the musicians at the further end. The whole effect of this magnificent suite of rooms, multiplied by mirrors from door to ceiling, and filled with elegantly-dressed people, was like that of a palatial levee.

Elodie had heard of the brilliant affair, and was wild to be of the party. Why not? It was a charity concert, and she was ready to contribute by the purchase of tickets. If not enough to be permitted to enter society, she could surely be present at the entertainment. She could have a new dress made; she could make one herself. She teased her guardian till she obtained his consent to her going.

"I am not in favor, Wyndham, of allowing that child to think she must go everywhere with us," observed the grave sister. "She is much too forward for her age."

"But this is an entertainment children will enjoy, as well as grown people. I know several who intend taking their families."

"I speak of general usage. You have indulged Elodie in going to theaters and operas and concerts, almost every evening."

"Not so often as that! not more than three evenings in a week."

"And how can she study, if she partakes of such amusements?"

"Do you find her backward?"

"I cannot say I do; she has more than ordinary powers, and learns rapidly. But it is not well to have her thoughts diverted. All her teachers will tell you so."

"I do not mean that they shall be. Let her understand that in future such indulgences must be rare. Though an evening now and then at the opera will help to cultivate her musical taste. She has rare talent for music."

"Certainly she has; but it needs strict training."

Elodie heard such conversations often enough to be aware that her protectors judged it expedient to restrain her passion for excitement.

She did not feel this need, and chafed at the restraint. She resolved to gratify her passion for dress on this occasion, and had actually purchased and begun to make up a rich white silk, embroidered with tiny sprigs of pink and gold—to be set off by a wreath of flowers to match crowning her head, and a fragrant bouquet at the bosom.

But Emily peremptorily interfered; laughed at the idea of so young a girl making her appearance in such a dress; and insisted on her wearing plain white muslin. She was supported by Mrs. Blount; and even Wyndham, when appealed to by his dissatisfied ward, urged on her the beauty of simplicity in her attire. Even ornament in her hair was forbidden.

If the poor child had been determined to set off her beauty to the best possible advantage, she could not have done it more effectually than by obeying the mandate of her seniors.

When she came into the parlor, ready to start, in her simple white dress with blue ribbon fastening the ruffle at her throat and blue ribbon confining her luxuriant hair—her wild-red complexion as pure and fresh as the petal of a flower, her blue eyes dancing with excitement, Wyndham was sure he never had beheld so lovely a creature.

Mrs. Blount took charge of her, and the four filled the carriage.

Just before them as they entered, they saw Ruhama Seaforth, leaning on the arm of Tom Wyatt.

Beside the young lady walked a stately gentleman, whose air and gait seemed familiar, in some degree, to Emily. But, as he bowed to several persons in passing, she noticed a decidedly foreign manner; and that was not to her taste.

Ruhama, as usual, was superbly dressed, in a gold-brown silk tunic over a rich dark-brown lower skirt, both trimmed profusely. She always wore her hair rather loaded with ornament. She was in contrast to Emily Blount, who was almost nun-like in her grave costume, and preferred the dull colors.

Ruhama and her party took a seat near the platform, and were presently joined by her father, and a noble-looking elderly man, who was invited by the banker to occupy a chair next his daughter. Both addressed him frequently, and called him General Meade.

Ruhama sent several messages by Tom to her friend Emily, who sat several rows of chairs behind her. On one slip of paper she had written:

"The Count del Raggio will sing the fourth song. He will not be on the platform."

Emily showed this to her brother. He shook his head; he had never met the celebrity.

The songs were alternated with dramatic recitations, and a scene between a lady and gentleman, in costume, with appropriate action.

When the fourth song was announced, as to be given by the celebrated artist, the Count del Raggio, there was a burst of kid-gloved applause from the fair portion of the crowded assemblage. Even portion of the gentlemen added their hearty clapping.

But there was no response by the appearance of the lion upon the stage. He was to accompany himself, and he had taken his seat at the grand piano so far on the left side as to be out of the view of a large part of the audience. Among these was the Blount party; and several around them expressed their disappointment.

"Why doesn't he come out and show himself?" murmured one.

"You know he is not a professional," answered a lady just behind her.

"But he might have acknowledged the applause with a bow at least."

"The eccentricity of genius!"

"Pshaw! I don't believe he merits half what they boast of him!"

"Wait, and judge for yourself!"

When the performer touched the instrument, all recognized at once a master-hand. Nothing had been heard like it. Elodie started from her employment of watching the late comers, and a flush of sudden delight illumined her face.

Even Miss Blount, little given as she was to raptures, was startled into admiration when she heard the stranger sing and play. The perfection of artistic skill seemed united with the freshness of wild nature in his performances. It was the gush of soul itself.

He was encoraged; and when he sung to an air composed by himself, the words of Metastasio, beginning, "L'Ouda dal mar divisa," the touching melancholy of the simple melody, representing the restless longing of a soul unsatisfied with all this life can offer, and finding repose only in death, deeply affected Emily. She turned away her head, for she felt the tears stealing down her cheeks.

Ruhama, who was observing her, noticed her agitation, and smiled, as if she thought she had achieved a triumph.

Wyndham, though he had no cultivation in the art, shared the enthusiasm of the rest.

Elodie could not contain her ecstatic emotions.

When the song was ended, the applause was overwhelming. Then came an interval for social converse.

"Dear guardy!" exclaimed Elodie, "is that gentleman—the count—an Italian? Then I'll be bound he is a teacher of music. Will you let me take lessons of him?"

"Hush, child!" whispered Emily. "He is not a teacher."

"How do you know? I never heard you say knew him. Will you bring him and introduce him after concert, guardy? I should like so much to know him."

"I am not acquainted with the gentleman," replied Wyndham.

"But Miss Seaforth will introduce you! See, he has come out to speak to her; and now she is looking this way! She would present him to Miss Blount."

"Be silent, Elodie," said Emily. "I do not wish the stranger to be introduced to us. No, Wyndham," she added to her brother, who had risen. "I beg you will not go there."

"He is a genius in music!" cried Wyndham.

"Who can he be?"

"An Italian. I have heard Ruhama speak of him. I think he brought letters to the banker. Don't look that way so persistently, Elodie. It is not well bred to gaze at people."

Wyndham noticed a tremor in his sister's voice, and other signs of disturbance, that showed she had been deeply moved by some cause or other.

"They are all looking this way again!" cried the impetuous little girl, "and Miss Seaforth is laughing; can it be at any of us? Are you sure, Mr. Wyndham, that the count would not give me lessons, if you were to ask him? All Italians are poor, and want pupils, I have heard."

"I think he must be an exception, my child. If he were needy, his friends would have recommended him. He seems tolerably intimate with the Seaforts."

Tom Wyatt came sauntering toward them at that moment, and stopped to enter into conversation with Emily and her brother.

He told her the count was only an amateur, and had required considerable persuasion to induce him to sing before so large an audience. "He is always ready to oblige in a private drawing-room, but appears to shrink from publicity."

"Then he is not at all professional?" asked Mrs. Blount.

"Oh, dear, no; not in the least. He has never made music a profession."

"He does not give lessons," put in Elodie.

"Not at all, I believe. He has an independent fortune, made, too, by himself; but not by art."

"How then?"

"By—upon my word I don't know precisely; but I think in some wealthy firm."

"Strange!" exclaimed Wyndham. "Those foreigners are so seldom engaged in mercantile pursuits! and with his wonderful talent for music, it is singular he did not put it to some lucrative use."

"That he has declined to do. He cultivates music as a pastime merely."

"I am so sorry for that," murmured Elodie.

Emily pressed her arm to keep her silent.

In the second part of the concert the count sung twice, being warmly encored each time.

The effect of his marvelous performance was greatly increased. All agreed that no such glorious voice, in an amateur, had ever been heard.

When the entertainment was over, about half the company departed, and room was left for dancing and the promenade.

As soon as she could, Ruhama came to join the Blounts. She drew Emily apart, and they went together into a refreshment room, and stood in an obscure corner.

"What think you of our musical lion?" asked Ruhama, observing the unusual flush on the cheeks of her friend.

"I cannot wonder at your—at the enthusiasm he creates," was the reply. "He possesses exquisite taste with powers, I confess

"You will save me—you will restore me to my friends!"

"Yeh—what Eagle say, he do. Frien's live yet, dough had big fight. Fight like debble—yon' frien's kill plenty Blackfeet," and the chief's brow darkened.

With difficulty Ada suppressed a cry of joy, but managed to do so, fearing to offend the chief. Then arising, though weak and stiff, she begged Eagle to lose no time in gaining the trail.

Pethonista led the way along a narrow, winding ledge that finally carried them to easier traveling. Then the chief briefly told her how he managed to follow Neepaughwhees through the night in time to rescue her.

He had heard the maiden's cry, and as the Indians were in full retreat, he made at once for the spot. He just caught a glimpse of Night-Walker and his captive, but soon after lost him in the gloom. From time to time he was rewarded with a glimpse of his rival, as the moon shone forth, but had not the scared chief kindled the fire, Eagle would have been too late to be of service. That guided him, and then came the death struggle.

The trail was a long and rough one, and twice the fugitives were forced to hide in order to escape being seen by some of the scattered Blackfeet, and once to make a wide *detour* that consumed fully an hour. From a high peak, as he neared the pass, Pethonista could see that it was guarded by Indians, and after a little reflection he told Ada that they must give up all hope of reaching her friends that day, or else take the perilous route that wound along the right wall of the canon; that upon which they stood when Maynard was shot.

Ada besought him to take this trail—anything was preferable to longer separation from her friends.

And thus they crept along the narrow ledge, each instant nearing death, though they little suspected that.

Along the face of the canon, at that dizzy height, each footstep one of peril, where one false step would doom the one taking it to a horrible death upon the rocks below.

Then the ledge widened. They proceeded more rapidly. Pethonista suddenly staggered back. A shrill yell burst from his lips. He flung aloft his arms and then disappeared over the escarpment. A sullen thud.

Ada sunk fainting to the ground, a rifle-ring ringing in her ears.

CHAPTER XV.

CAMPBELL COUNTS A COUP.

YELLOWSTONE JACK and his comrades closely followed the young avenger's advice, and added their voices to his with a zeal that far surpassed his expectations, and in such a variety of tones that the Blackfeet were scarcely to blame in believing every one of the shots that followed each other so rapidly from the revolvers, came from a separate and distinct foeman. Already they had their hands full. The emigrants, knowing that to yield would be death, stubbornly held the red demons at bay. When the war-cry of their dreaded enemy was recognized, so quickly the savages broke and fled in hot haste, the majority making for the horses, others taking to the hills and rocks, where, in the darkness, pursuit could easily be baffled.

They were not chased far, as the emigrants had been too hardly pressed to risk the advantage gained by foolhardiness. The trappers and Campbell were warmly greeted by the survivors of the fight, and after the level space before the corral was searched, the wounded Indians being put out of their misery, the dead scalped and dragged to one side where they could afford no cover for their skulking brethren, in case another attack was decided upon, the weapons dropped by the Blackfeet were gathered up and the entire party re-entered the corral.

On counting heads, it was found that four emigrants had been killed, nine more wounded, one mortally. This heavy loss, together with the unknown fate of Maynard and the two women, cast a gloom over all.

With weapons in hand, ready for instant use, the men watched through the remaining hours of that long night. They could hear occasional signals coming from the hills and plain, but the darkness covered all. Thus, weary, jaded, sick at heart, the day dawned upon them.

During the night there had been a consultation between John Warren, Campbell and the trappers. It decided their plans for the day. If possible, they were to leave the train and search for the missing ones, though there would be considerable danger of being picked off by some of the scattered Blackfeet. As Campbell declared—and the trappers readily agreed that he was right—the end of the matter was not yet. The Blackfeet would never rest until they had avenged the death of their brethren by wiping out the pale-faced invaders. Though they might not be strong enough to venture another attack at once, they would lurk around the trail until they could be reinforced. Beyond a doubt, even at that moment, some of the best runners were on the way for reinforcements.

"What's Hoosier?" suddenly asked Brindle Joe, as the party were about to venture forth. "He ain't hyar."

"I reckon he's all right," quietly replied Yellowstone Jack. "Mebbe he's gone on ahead to see of that's any snags in the way."

It was in the gray of dawn. The trappers thought it best to leave the corral undiscovered, if possible, and so set out early, at first gliding directly away from the point where the trail had been lost on the preceding day. A few hundred yards would carry them to the broken ground, where they would have good cover to aid them in passing whatever spies the enemy might have upon the look-out.

As both Campbell and Yellowstone were well acquainted with the ground, little time was lost, every step leading in the right direction. Yet the sun was two hours high before they reached the mouth of the Wolf Pass, having done a great deal of cautious skulking in order to escape being seen by the Indians whom they discovered stationed at different points.

"I am puzzled," frankly admitted Campbell, after a considerable time spent in trying to recover the lost trail. "I can't see into it. Where can they have gone? I left them here, alive and well, with the worst of the storm over. It's strange—very strange!"

"Strange things is mighty apt to happen in these parts, stranger," quietly observed Yellowstone. "I've seen stranger things 'tharin' the week. An' that makes me think—yes, hyar 'tis. Mebbe you kin tell me what them crooked scratches mean," and the scout produced the bit of white buck-skin that had been wrapped around the arrow sent over his head by the strange maiden of the valley.

"It's writing!" exclaimed John Warren, taking the skin. "What does it mean? It says: 'I am in danger. The Blackfeet have found your trail. To-night they will attack you. Your only hope is instant flight. From one who wishes you well.'"

"Kin a sperrit write?" abruptly demanded Jack.

"That's a question you can answer as well as I can. But why do you ask?" replied Warren, curiously.

"Nothin'—never mind. The gals fust, I reckon. I move we take a look down the kennon."

Warren turned pale as death, for he could not help but read the trapper's thought. Indeed, it was possible that the lost ones had been swept from the rock by the fearful tempest. And there seemed no other solution to the mystery. Had they left the spot by any other way, surely the keen-eyed scouts would have detected some signs of a trail. And there were none to be found.

"Look yender!" muttered Brindle Joe, after he had traversed something over a mile. "See that varmint, by the scrambly pine on the rock. I kin drap 'im frum hyar," and he handled his rifle eagerly.

"Don't be a fool, Joe; we don't want the hull kit on our backs, when we git in the kennon. Mustn't burn powder if it kin be helped mind that."

"Yellowstone is right. We are not our own masters now, until this matter is fairly settled. After that there will be time enough for paying off old scores. I think we can manage to pass by without being discovered; if not, then leave him to me," said Campbell. In single file the quartette glided along, taking advantage of every rock and bush to screen themselves from the roving gaze of the savage perched upon the point of rocks. This maneuvering consumed time, but it was finally successful, and then, when the look-out was safely passed, our friends increased their pace, and soon reached a point where they could descend into the canon.

At some distant age, this canon had evidently been the channel of some powerful stream. The sides of rock were worn and eaten curiously, and some of the larger boulders that thickly strewed the bed were worn smooth and round. Others had more recently fallen from the heights above, and were still rough and jagged. There was a thin deposit of sand and earth along the bed, and this had, in places, given growth to shrubs, vines and even good-sized trees.

"We could play hide-an'-hunt us hyar wi' the hull Blackfoot tribe for a month o' Sundays!" observed Brindle Joe, curiously noting some of the coverts.

"Ontel they'd roast us out, you mean. This stuff'd burn like greasewood, in a fair breeze."

A low exclamation from Campbell, who was a few yards in advance, interrupted the trapper. He was leaning over a blood-stained rock, that had barely dried.

"Sign—and it came from up there," he slowly said, pointing upward, where the bent and broken branches of the tree lent emphasis to his words.

"Cain't be; that's no gittin' 'ithin' half a mile o' the edge up thar," positively returned Yellowstone Jack.

"Yes there is; I know a trail that would lead one right above us, though 'twould require strong nerves and a steady hand. And some one has tried it, as you see."

"Must 'a bin the devil, then, for no human critter could fall down frum that an' live afer. Yit hyar's trail, one a blind man could fol'er," retorted Brindle Joe, pointing to a few drops of blood that his keen eye had discovered, leading away from the spot.

Campbell and Yellowstone eagerly bent over the trail, and Warren waited for their verdict with beating heart. Yet it did not seem possible that his lost ones could have reached this spot.

"Well see where it leads, anyway. Brindle Joe, will you trail, or shall I?" uttered Campbell.

"You lead; we'll kiver you. Thar may be varmints at t'other end o' this. Old man, you kinder keep ahind, so's not to spile the trail. Now, stranger, spread y'self."

But Campbell found little difficulty in following the trail. The blood-drops were never more than a yard apart, sometimes even closer, and a far less experienced eye than his would have sufficed for the task.

"Bleeds like a stuck pig!" muttered Brindle Joe.

"Must be a healthy critter, to walk so fur' as steady, afer a tumble like that," added Yellowstone.

The trail led on for over half a mile, then seemed to end all at once. The blood-drops were no longer to be seen, until Yellowstone pointed to a place where the wall slanted abruptly down to the canon bed. His keen eye had detected a tiny blotch of blood.

"He's in them bushes, I reckon," muttered the trapper.

His voice was abruptly drowned by a half-stifled shriek, coming from the point toward which their faces were turned. Then they distinguished the words:

"Mercy—would you murder me?"

"It's Maynard's voice—I know it!" cried Warren, leaping up the rude steps and tearing aside the vine-wreathed bushes, revealing a dark cavity.

"A'er 'im; he'll git into a pizen scrape, the old fool!" gritted Yellowstone Jack, as he sprang forward.

A strange scene lay before them. The weird woman clutching a knife, bending over the feebly struggling emigrant. She had heard the cry of John Warren, and turned her head in surprise.

The emigrant sprung forward and wrested the weapon from her hand, hurling her with violence against the rocks. She dropped in a heap, senseless.

"Thank God! I owe you my life!" faintly uttered Maynard.

"My child—Minnie—where is she?" cried the almost-distracted father, staring wildly around, as though hoping to discover his lost ones hidden within the cave.

"God knows!" brokenly replied the young man. "They were with me when I was shot—then I fell down from the ledge we were upon. A strange man found me, and brought me here. Then she came, and—"

"What is he? Mebbe he kin tell us somethin'," suggested Yellowstone Jack, as Warren sunk to the floor.

At this moment a rifle-shot sounded from without, mingled with a shrill yell of mortal agony; and a moment later there came a dull, heavy, sickening thud upon the rocky bed of the canon.

"Come out here, you fellows—I've made a coup and found a prize!" cried Campbell's voice, exultantly.

As the trio emerged, they saw him bending over a horribly crushed and mangled corpse, coolly tearing off the feathered scalp lock.

"A chief—see!" and he held up the disgusting trophy, while a fiendish expression distorted his pale features. "A chief of the Blackfeet; and he was in nice business, too! You see the ledge above—it's where the blue line of rock ends. He was upon that, with—now, old man, don't go into a fit—she's all right,

though she did fall back out of sight—I said he was with a woman—a white woman. You're right, old man—twas one of those we were looking for. The black-haired one."

A groan of agony burst from Warren's lips; but then he quickly brightened up. Though Campbell had seen only one, it was possible that Minnie was also there. At least Ada would be apt to know where she was to be found.

"Quick—we must rescue her—oh, hasten!"

"Easy, old man—that's the young feller an' the—"

"Thar goes the witch!" yelled Brindle Joe, pointing along the canon bed. "How'd she slip past us?"

"You fellers kin see to the gal—I'm goin' to ketch that witch," gritted Yellowstone.

"Thar's Chavez to pay for yit!"

He darted away, closely followed by Brindle Joe.

"We'll have to leave the young man, since he is unable to walk," said Campbell. "We can send back for him after we rescue the lady. I'll tell him."

Maynard gladly consented to remain behind, when he heard what had happened. Campbell left him a revolver, to defend himself with, in case of need, and then left the den, accompanied by John Warren.

"Now, old man, put your legs to good use. The sooner we get up thar, the easier I'll feel," muttered Campbell, darting away.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 278.)

Belle & Beau

PARTED.

BY HARVEY HOWARD.

The stars that shine above the night

Or sparkle in the sea,

Seem to my heart not half so bright

As when you watched with me.

The wind that plays among the trees

And creeps the clover through,

Is far less pleasant than the breeze

That fanned both me and you.

The meteor's lightning track displays

Its pale prophetic power;

For it foretold but sunny days

Where now the storm-clouds lower.

The last farewell we spoke in play

Was "Fare-thee-well!" indeed—

All with loving hearts now gay

Before the parting will bleed!

Alas! that love should ever be,

As mine has been, in vain!

For hearts that love in truth, though free,

Can never love again.

I have no bitter words for you,

Whom I have loved and lost;

Your friendship was not base, untrue—

You did not count the cost

Of our brief summertime of love,

In which we were as gay,

As happy in each other's love

As I am sad to-day.

Yet how much less it were to gain,

If you had been untrue,

The loveliest things that yet remain

Than thus remember you!

She bowed coldly, and said:

"It is of no consequence." Pray don't humble yourself to apologize; you will kindly allow me to pass, I think. . . . ill go in."

"But you will let me tell you first what I tried to make you understand before. Upon my honor, Miss Butterworth, I meant just what I said. I want you to marry me," and he made an unsuccessful attempt to possess himself of her hand.

"You are very kind, sir," she said, in a freezing a manner as a poor girl nearly melted to tears well could. "But you must excuse me. I feel obliged to deny your request," and she hurried by him. He stood a moment really grieved and very much puzzled to know how he should come to an understanding with her. Then, as she vanished up the stair, he could not for the life of him avoid calling after her:

"Excuse me for not taking such an answer. You are under age, and I shall ask your father."

Mrs. Butterworth's boarder had drawn

Mrs. Butterworth's best rocking-chair out upon

Mrs. Butterworth's front porch, and was now

sitting with his slipped feet upon the railing,

smoking his meerschaum, as coolly as though it was December instead of July.

I HOPED.

BY L. C. GREENWOOD.

When my years were bright with the sunshine of youth; And childhood all seemed a dream of divine truth; When the idle hours on light pinions flew, And yearnings awakened, as older I grew;

I hoped

That the long, long years in their flight were more fleet; That childhood were over and youth I might greet.

But a good mother's teachings were not effaced, As little by little the world I had learned.

I hoped

That the ever-progressing and changeful time, On his strong wings might bear me to manhood's prime.

The bright days of my youth in swiftness all passed, Swift as the gold-lined clouds that cannot last;

And in manhood's vigor, that long hoped-for pride, I found myself embarked on life's restless tide.

I hoped

When full weary of its vicissitudes' rage, To find peace and rest in the haven of age.

I long weathered life's storms, but not all unharmed,

For I reached that haven of life's prime disarmed;

But time left his mark on my form and my face,

Memory still strong back to past life could view.

I hoped

As my bent form older and more helpless grew,

That the bright days of my childhood I could view.

Gone are the days I so gladly saw fly,

And with them the years for which I did sigh;

Time, forward but not backward will ever go,

And I see the years of my youth flew not slow.

In my childhood, my youth, my manhood and age,

And a hope in dying, my heart shall engage.

When the world shall grow dark and fades from my view,

When the last breath escapes me, I feebly drew;

As they the bright portals of Heaven unbar.

I hoped

That the sweet allurement in life so blest

Will guide me as safely to your world of rest.

Holly Wilde's Master.

BY LUCILLE HOLLIS.

MRS. CLYDE VERRANE was certainly handsome as she swept into the grand old library at Holly Wilde. She had been indisposed since her arrival, the previous night, and this was her first appearance below stairs. Though she came down in costly dinner toilet, and was a woman whose age might have varied from twenty-five to thirty-five, I recognized her instantly as the original of the portrait hanging upon the dining-room wall; an almost child, in riding-habit; and knew that the former mistress of Holly Wilde was she who swept past me with such supreme disregard of my presence. She had scarcely changed. It was the same haughty face and queenly head with its coronal of lusterless, rebellious, dusky hair loosely waved away from the creamy-brunette fore-head; the same straight, perfect line of brow and intense eyes under a rich fringe of lash; and large, determined mouth and graceful, regal form.

Yes, she certainly was rarely handsome as she shone among the vivid scarlets of a great velvet chair, her passionless, southern-pale face—very supercilious, slightly wearied—and her exquisite figure, in its perfectly-fitting robe of silvery silk, outlined against its warm coloring. Her jewel-studded hands lay restfully on her lap. A spray of yellow-centered syringas nestled in her hair. Marvels of gold and red coral adorned her ears, gleamed at her throat, and banded her wrist. Altogether, in her magnificence of form, and face, and costume, I thought Mrs. Clyde Verrane about as splendid a picture as ever I had looked upon. Nor did I marvel that old Mrs. Verrane, the present nominal mistress of Holly Wilde, had desired this woman's presence here with firm belief that the result would be the subjugation of the heart and hand of Holly Wilde's master.

Just as I speculated on, as to whether Mrs. Verrane, the younger, knew why she had been sent from Europe, what the madame expected of her, and whether the daughter-in-law was quite willing to work out a fulfillment of the older lady's wishes, the door opened and Douglas Verrane came into his cousin's presence.

She lifted her eyes slowly, with thrilling intensity, and a look of pleasure swept her creamy face.

"My cousin Douglas, I am sure," she said, as he walked swiftly to her side in his easy, but vigorously manly fashion. And well she might be sure. No one who had ever seen or heard of Holly Wilde's master could mistake his kindly form and carriage and grand beauty.

"Yes, I am Douglas Verrane, certainly, and delighted to welcome the former mistress of Holly Wilde back to its walls. I hope you will not find much change, and will be contented when you remain with us."

"I cannot fail to be that," she said, so calmly that it scarcely seemed a compliment. Mr. Verrane turned to me.

"This is Lucia England, madame's companion and the general overseer of our comforts."

I am afraid I colored a little at his kindly words, for Mrs. Clyde Verrane gave me a long, surprised and insolent stare before she nodded slightly and turned again to her cousin.

"Madame, cousin Douglas, I hope she is well, and"—with a slight tinge of bitterness and enmity in her tone—"I suppose it would do no harm to add, that I hope, with years, she has lost some of her old irritability and domineering spirit."

"Mrs. Clyde Verrane would scarcely hope for anything she did not think eminently proper; but I have never had reason to entertain any thoughts of my aunt that were not thoroughly respectful."

"Thank you for the reproof," with an enchantingly musical little laugh. "You are a chevalier one might worship, in these days, when knighthood is almost a thing of the past; but, really, I am afraid you do not know my mamma-in-law, our aunt, as well as I."

Other visitors came in them. Shortly after a waiter announced dinner and I went to perform my duties at the table, where madame seldom appeared, followed by the master of Holly Wilde with his cousin upon his arm. But my reign was over. I knew that, even before Mr. Verrane whispered, softly:

"Would you mind considering the center seat yours, Lucia, while Mrs. Verrane is with us? It is madame's wish that I should request her to do the honors of the table."

Of course I took the seat assigned me; but, somehow, all through that gay hour—during which all seemed to exert themselves to be brilliantly entertaining, and to outdo one the other in paying homage to the splendid woman who had once ruled in that same dining-room—I could not help wondering if Fate had chosen this woman queen of Good Fortune. For it seemed to me that the woman who should win the sovereignty of Douglas Verrane's heart must indeed be that. I had not seen much of the world, nor of men, but I

knew there were plenty of women who had, that yet would have thought with me that to sit thus opposite Holly Wilde's master, in the sunshine of such possibilities as the future held for Mrs. Clyde Verrane, was to be made blessed.

I did not leave the dining-room with the ladies, but went directly up to madame.

"Well?" she said, questioningly, as I went to her side to receive any commands she might have for me. "You have seen my daughter-in-law; what do you think of her?"

"That she is very handsome, madame."

"Aha! I think she cannot have changed much. Is she handsome enough, think you, for Douglas to admire?"

"Quite. Indeed, enough for any man to admire, I should think," I answered, truthfully.

"Well, well, she was an out-and-out Verrane," the old lady said, snapping her black eyes up at me. "Now Douglas has not a family look nor trait, which ought to make them a well-mated couple. Better, even, than were she and her cousin Clyde," and madame's thoughts and eyes wandered to the portrait of her son that hung opposite her couch, and bore a striking resemblance to the cousin who had been his wife. For a few minutes she remained lost in memories; then turned suddenly to me.

"Child, tell Hester to bring Mrs. Clyde to me; and then you may amuse yourself until I want you; but do not go out of the room, for I mean to visit the parlors to-night."

"I went away with a book to my favorite recess and rocker. After what must have seemed a tedious time to madame—for I heard her sigh and move about fretfully—the sweep of Mrs. Clyde's dress sounded in the room, followed by her rich, soft tones.

"Ah, madame mere, I trust that I have the felicity of finding you comfortable."

"Quite as comfortable as usual, thank you," the old lady answered, rather stiffly. "And you, it is not necessary to ask whether you have entirely recovered from your indisposition. And you evidently find your return to Holly Wilde agreeable, judging from the tardiness with which you leave its pleasures."

"To this irritable speech the younger lady made no reply; and presently madame continued: "And how is the boy, Mrs. Clyde?"

"Very well, thank you, and progressing finely in his studies. He sent his kind regards to his grandmamma, and this," and she placed a miniature in madame's hand.

"A Verrane! a thorough Verrane! the image of you and Clyde, Ida! And now to talk business, for we may as well understand each other distinctly. I suppose you know why I sent for you to come from Germany."

"It would not have been easy to have misunderstood your letter."

"Then you know that you must marry Douglas."

"Perhaps it would be well to put in the pro—viso—if he will marry me," suggested Mrs. Clyde, calmly.

"You were not wont to suggest the impossibility of your winning a heart," cried madame, scornfully. "And was there, it seemed to me so, a taunt in the words? At all events there was no mistaking the ring of defiance in the younger woman's tones, as she answered:

"You will kindly remember, madame, that we are not discussing the past. Anything you have to say in reference to the future I think you will find me ready to listen to attentively. There are but two things in life I hold worth achieving; one of those the welfare of my son."

"And the other," madame said, sardonically, "is revenge on Calvin Chancellyr." Her daughter-in-law's eyes lighted up fierily, but the old lady went on: "Perhaps you have not heard that he died three months ago, and left his wife and little daughter to Douglas' care, and that Douglas goes South next week, to bring them to Holly Wilde," and madame stopped to note the effect of her words on her companion.

Mrs. Clyde's face was set and white, yet she laughed softly.

"I suppose this fact in no small measure influenced your urgent summons to me."

"You are right there, Mrs. Clyde Verrane. Holly Wilde must never pass out of the hands of our family. The Verranes have married each other for generations, and now that, by will, the estate goes to Douglas—instead of Clyde's son—you and he must marry, and the estate revert to your son, as you will take care that it shall do after you are Douglas' wife. I shall only leave him my property, worth far more than the estate itself, upon condition that while he uses it as he pleases—Holly Wilde shall go to my grandson."

"Very well, madame; I think you will not find me remiss in winning for my boy the position of future master of Holly Wilde. As Douglas has only the estate, with little ready money, I think there will be no danger but that your wealth, added to my own property, will accomplish the succession of Holly Wilde to him who should be its master."

And so I learned how coolly kind, proud Douglas was to be defrauded, if possible, by these two women, of his rightful mastership. If, before, I had entertained no kindly affection for Mrs. Clyde Verrane, I now heartily despised her.

The next morning I was out early, as was my custom, in the park. I felt bitterly conscious that all the old, peaceful, happy days at Holly Wilde were past, therefore I had no reason to expect that Mr. Verrane would meet me, and walk with me in kindly conversation as he often had done. Yet I was disappointed that he did not, and was sensible of pain that I found him loitering on the rose-terrace with his cousin, who—it seems—had also proved an early riser.

"Fasten this rose for me, Douglas," she was saying, as I came up. "Then I must go to our guests."

How coolly she usurped already a joint reign with him; and how bewitchingly she bowed her head for him to arrange the glossy leaves and white flower in her dusky hair. He complied gracefully with the lady's command, yet I am not sure I was not foolish enough to be glad that there was an amused, full scornful smile upon his face. As she passed off the terrace he turned to me with a kindly good-morning, asking:

"Have you had a pleasant walk, little woman?"

I stammered out some kind of an affirmative. I could not tell him the truth, that it had been a most miserable one, since he had not shared it; for, inexperienced as I was in the ways of men, my simplicity had not done him the injustice of misunderstanding his kindness to me, no matter what I might have discovered in relation to my own feelings, during the past few hours. He went on:

"I meant to have walked with you. I had a matter of which I wished to speak, but Mrs. Clyde Verrane detained me." Then, as his eye caught the sweep of her white robes, passing along the marble portico, he added, "what do you think of her, Lucia?"

"I am hardly prepared to pass an opinion," I answered.

"Ah! Yes you are;" and his blue eyes laughed down into mine. "You dislike her; and that is a bond of sympathy between you and I."

Madame sent for me just then, and I went swiftly away with heart bounding; and fell to wondering what the matter was of which he wished to speak. I knew, later, when he told me of his proposed journey South, of the widow and little girl who were coming to make their home at Holly Wilde, and of the arrangements he wished me to superintend for their comfort.

But the days sped rapidly from sunsettings to sunrises, and still Mr. Verrane delayed his journey; at which I marvelled. Could it be possible, despite his intimation of dislike for her, that he was fettered by the influence of his fair cousin? Doubtless it was so. He was with her more and more daily; and Mrs. Clyde Verrane, aside from her wealth, culture, grace, and splendid personnel, lacked none of those accomplishments with which women allure men; and he was ardently aesthetic, and had all the fire of young manhood and the Verranes in his blood.

At the end of three weeks he made his adieux to madame, sought me with a kindly farewell clasp of hand, and a tinge of self-reproach in his voice, as he said:

"Lucia, little woman, I fear you have been sadly lonely of late. I had not meant to have deserted you so."

And then he went down to her, on the terrace; and said he was sure he left the honors of Holly Wilde in good hands, and she must command as pleased her most during his absence, and lifted her fingers to his lips, and sprang to the carriage.

It was just two weeks when he brought home Mrs. Chancellyr, a dainty, frail, child-like looking little creature, with sea-shell tinted face, and wavy, flossy hair of brown, drawn plainly away from her Madagascan-pure brow; that overshadowed eyes like blue stars of myrtle at the sun-rising; and her child, a little, blue-eyed, yellow-haired, dimpled girl, of four or five years, whom he kissed as he carried her, sleepily, in his arms, up the steps to a waiting servant.

"Mrs. Chancellyr, allow me to present to you Mrs. Clyde Verrane, my cousin and cousin-in-law, who was an acquaintance of your husband's."

"How pleasant," said Mrs. Chancellyr, acknowledging the introduction with easy cordiality, which only encountered haughty ceremoniousness from Mrs. Clyde Verrane. There was evidently to be no friendliness between these women.

Little Dell was a sweet child. I grew to love her rapidly. Though madame was getting nervous and hard to please, she was always kind to Dell, and the little one was much with me. While over Holly Wilde—as the time since Mrs. Chancellyr's arrival came to be marked in weeks—a storm seemed to brood. There were several visitors with us and much gaiety. In it all Mrs. Chancellyr and Mrs. Verrane moved with perfect thoroughbredness, one lovely and winning, the other splendid and fascinating. But, by some instinct, I knew that each day lessened the tarry of one or the other. I was not mistaken. The denouement of the little drama progressing at Holly Wilde was near at hand. One morning I had taken a book, and little Dell, to a pleasant bower in the park, and the child had fallen asleep upon the rustic seat with her head of yellow, dampening curls resting on my lap. Mr. Verrane found us there. He leaned over the arm of twisted wood, to see what I was reading, and to play with Dell's bright rings of hair. And all about us was the dense coolness and quiet. And then the thud of horses' hoofs, coming slowly up the drive, broke in on the stillness, and the two women who were rivals, followed at a distance by grooms, came so near us we might almost have put our hands through the leafage and stayed their course.

"Return to Europe! How come you to think so?" Mrs. Verrane was asking, with a surprised, cool, incredulous laugh.

"I could see flames, like the pink in opals, flicker into Mrs. Chancellyr's cheeks.

"Why, I understood you were only here on a visit."

"True, I only came for a visit; but the fate seem to have ordained that I shall remain. I supposed you knew that I am to be come Mr. Douglas Verrane's wife!"

I saw a gleam cross Mrs. Chancellyr's mirthless eyes as if a glint of sunshine had fallen on them; then the momentary annoyance passed, and a look of intense love, lightened by amusement, transfigured her face.

"It is scarcely strange I did not know it since Mr. Douglas Verrane is my husband."

Ida Verrane faced about, reining up her horse with a fierce, swift motion that chilled me to the bone. "How dare you tell me a story so disgraceful!"

Now the sunshine glint shone in the blue eyes again; but Mrs. Chancellyr answered, calmly: "There is no disgrace in it. Mr. Verrane honored me beyond all need when he learned to love me ere he had known me a week. When he passionately urged an immediate marriage my heart would not say him nay. But, because I had been so short a time a widow, and must pass the ordeal of coming to a strange house full of gay visitors, I begged him to keep it secret until fall. As he has complied with my wishes solely, I am sure he will be glad I have revealed the fact, to deceive you."

Mrs. Verrane's face was horribly white, and, despite her efforts at control, speech seemed wrung from her.

"I loved Calvin Chancellyr, and lost him through you! Now you have crossed my path again! I will repay you some time—some time!" She cut her horse cruelly with her gold-handled whip and went flying up the avenue without seeing the mischief she had accomplished. The lash had stung her rival's animal as well, and its wild plunge unseated the frail rider and threw her forcibly against a tree.

If I had any feelings of my own in those few moments, I forgot them all in horror as I saw the master of Holly Wilde, with bloodless face, lifting his bruised and senseless wife from the turf and bearing her toward the house. I was there as soon as he; it is time to hear his hoarse call to his cousin, as she was passing up the stairway.

"Ida Verrane! you have done this! I am master of Holly Wilde, and I command you to leave it—leave it this hour!"

leave me again until you have heard all. Tell me, I say, that it is not true."

"What is not true? Oh, I don't know what you're talking about, cousin Tom!" said Vicia, looking round her in distress.

In spite of his momentary craziness, Tom saw her pale face and terrified eyes, and became aware that he was crushing the little hands as if they were in thumb-screws, and relaxed his bear-like grip contritely.

"I am a brute!" said Tom, in a burst of penitence hardly less vehement than his former tone. "Poor little hands! I didn't mean to hurt them; but you know, Vicia, what a fellow I am, and that infernal story they told me has nearly driven me crazy. I am a savage, I know, and what must you think of me, Vicia?"

Vicia laughed, but yet with a rather pale cheek.

"That Lord Lisle's port is rather strong, and you have been imbibing more than is good for you, cousin Tom."

"Oh, she thinks I am drunk!" said Tom, with another burst, this time with indignation; "but allow me to tell you, Miss Shirley, I haven't dined at all! Port, indeed! Faith it was more than wine that has got into my head to-night."

There was a cadence so bitter in his tone that Vicia opened her pretty blue eyes very wide, and looked at him in astonishment. Cousin Vic was very fond of cousin Tom; and she never felt inclined to run away from him, as she invariably did from cousin Leicester.

"Something has gone wrong, cousin Tom, and you are excited. Come, sit down here, and tell me what it is."

There was a rustic bench under the waving chestnuts. Vicia sat down, spread out her rosy skirts, and made room for him beside her; but Tom would not be tempted to sit down at any price, and burst out again:

"It is just this, Vicia! They told me you were going to be married!"

The bright eyes dropped, and the pale cheeks took the tint of the reddest rose ever seen.

"I know it is not true! It can't be true!"

She did not answer.

"Speak!" exclaimed Tom, almost fiercely; "speak and tell me it is not true!"

"I cannot!" very faintly.

"My God!" he said; "you can never mean to say it is true!"

She arose suddenly, and looked at him, a cold terror chilling her heart.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"Vicia, is it true?"

"It is!"

"You are going to be married to Leicester Cliffe?"

"I am!"

The rosy light had left her cheeks, for there was something in his face that no one had ever seen in Tom Shirley's face before.

"Do you love him?"

"Tom, what are you thinking of, to ask such a question?"

"Answer it!" he said, savagely.

"I will love him!" said Vicia, firmly, and Tom broke out into a bitter jeering laugh.

"Which means you will marry him now because he is an excellent parti, and papa and grandmamma, and uncle Roland, wish it, and trust to the love to come afterward!" Vic Shirley, you are a miserable, heartless coquette, and I despise you!"

She was leaning against a tree; clinging to it for support; her whole face perfectly colorless, but the blue eyes quailed not beneath his own.

"You!"—he went on, in passionate scorn, and with flaming eyes—"you, the spotless, immaculate Victoria Shirley. You who set up for an angel, and made common mortals feel unworthy to touch the hem of your garment. You the angel on earth! a wretched, cold-blooded, perfumed girl! Oh, Lucifer! star of the morning, how thou art fallen!"

"Tom, what have I ever done to you to make you talk like this?"

"Oh, nothing! only sold yourself body and soul—a mere trifling not worth speaking of."

She gave him a look full of sorrow and reproach, and turned with quiet dignity to go away.

"Stay!" he half shouted, "and tell me for what end you have been fooling me all these months."

"I do not understand."

"Poor child! Its little head never was made to untangle such knotty problems. Will you understand if I ask you why you've led me on, like a blind fool, to love you?"

"Tom?"

"You never thought of it before, of course; but you have done it, and I love you. And now, before you stir a step, you shall tell me whether or not it is returned."

"I do love you, Tom—I always have—as dearly as if you were my brother."

"I'm exceedingly obliged to you; but, as it happens, I don't want your brotherly love, and I shall take the first opportunity of sending a bullet through Mr. Leicester Cliffe's head. I have the honor, Miss Shirley, to bid you good night."

"Tom, stay! Tom, for God's sake!"

And here the voice broke down, and covering her face with both hands, she burst into a hysterical passion of weeping. Tom turned, and the great grieved giant heart, so fiery in its wrath, melted like a boy's at sight of her tears. He could have cried himself, but for shame, as he flung himself down on the bench with a sobbing groan.

"Oh, Vicia! how could you do it? How could you treat me so?"

She came over, and kneeling beside him, put one arm around his neck, as if, indeed, he had been the dear brother she thought him.

"Oh, Tom, I never meant it—I never meant it!"

"And you will marry Leicester?"

"You know I must, Tom; but you will be my dear brother always."

He turned away and dropped his head on his arm.

"You know it is my duty, Tom. And, oh, you must not think such dreadful things of me any more! If you do, I shall die!"

"Go!" he said, lifting his head for a moment and then dropping it again. "Go and leave me! I know, Vicia, you are an angel, and I—I am nothing but a miserable fool!"

And with the words the boy's heart went out from Tom Shirley, and never came back again.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 269.)

To meet the pressing demand for an immediate reissue of the next story of the now celebrated "Overland Kit" romances, viz.:

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TO A WITHERED DAISY.

BY MARY E. SADLER.

My daisy—my daisy—oh, bonny wee gem!
My wounds are all bleeding anew,
As unclasping my Bible you drop from your stem,
And her grave opens up to my view.

Let me hide you away as the form you once decked
Has been hid 'neath the dew and the frost,

For my idol was clay—and one day-dream was

When my heart's sweetest daisy was lost.

But if when my head has grown hoary with age

I am callous to other folks' pain,

Let me open by chance at this hallowed page,

Then my young grief will well up again.

Those shining eyes of heavenly blue

Yielded no dread eclipse,

I bowed and moaned, wildly sue

To kiss her sacred lips.

The token of a mother's woe

Sealed by that icy kiss,

Must all my prayers and strivings go

For this—for this—for this?

Just once her infant lips did frame

The sacred name of mother,

And dying, left me thus baptized

Apart from every other.

Was it to know me when we meet

Beyond the starry sky,

To stamp that name on memory sweet:

Why did she speak it—why?

Sometimes I fear the grave will hold

Her ever from my sight,

And ever and anon I raise

A silent prayer for light.

Is there a land of pure delight

Beyond death's narrow sea?

And shall I know my darling

Clothed in immortality?

Oh, have I now a seraph child

Arrayed in shining white?

And will she call me mother there?

I'm praying still for light!

Glancing astern, as the ship bowled merrily along, Captain Davenport was delighted to observe, by the lights of the approaching cruisers, that they were drawing toward the spot where the lifeboat had been left, with an anchor attached to a heavy cable thrown over to hold it steady, evidently believing the lights to be on the schooner, which was lying-to to await their coming.

"They are fooled nicely, and will be as mad as a nest of hornets, when they arrive at the decoy and find out their mistake," said the captain, speaking aloud the thoughts that were in every mind.

"Yes, it has fooled them, captain, and why

should it not, for the devil would lead a saint astray," put in the mate, in a disconsolate tone, for he fully believed that the helm of the schooner was guided by his Satanic majesty.

"Conover, you are a fool."

"Yes, Captain Davenport," meekly responded the mate.

"Yes, for do you not see that the schooner

is run by mortal hands?"

"No, I do not see anything of the kind; we

saw that craft to day, and then lost sight of her, I hoped forever; but here, in the midst of this storm she suddenly comes upon us, and lo!

we obey her orders, for it is not in the power

of man to resist the commands of her skipper."

"Skipper! Who, in the devil's name, do

you believe him to be?" almost angrily asked the Captain.

"You have named him, sir: yonder schooner

is commanded by the evil one. Laugh if you

will, but did you not see she was crowded with

canvas when she first came upon us, and when

we again looked, she was under bare poles al-

most; and yet flies away from the Sea-Slipper like a bird from a hound."

"And see, yonder she goes, rushing right

down upon a lee shore, and the night as dark

as a nigger's face, and here we go right on in

her wake like—"

"Why, Mr. Conover, you seem to be very

superstitious. Do you not know the Flying

Yankee has proven the friend of Americans?"

asked the sweetly modulated voice of Eve El-

drived.

"Yes, Miss, the devil is a friend to all sin-

ners."

"You are inclined to be complimentary, Mr.

Conover; but, as your brain is working too

hard, I must counteract it by giving you work

for your hands, so go forward and shake a reef

out of the sails now set, for do you not see our

pilot is dropping us rapidly astern?" and the

captain spoke sternly, and in a manner that

gave the mate to understand he desired no

more croaking.

"Ha! they are letting out the secret on yon-

der old liner, for see, there go her signals to

tell their comrades the bird has flown," exclaim-

ed Captain Davenport, a moment after, as he

saw a bright rocket soar heavenward from the

deck of the frigate, that had approached near

enough to the decoy to observe the deception

practiced by the Sea-Slipper.

"Stand ready all to wear ship!" suddenly

cried the captain, in ringing tones, and, while

the words were yet upon his lips, there came an

answering signal of the starboard-bow, and,

as Colonel Moncrief spoke, above the roar of

the storm resounded a strange crashing, peal-

ing, moaning sound, commingled, while from

the forecastle rung the startling cry, "Break-

ers of the port bow!"

"My God, have we followed to our ruin?"

exclaimed the captain, springing to the wheel.

suming the combat with greater earnestness, as if to avenge the loss of the brig, while, doubtless with the same motive for vengeance, the English man-of-war once more directed her guns upon her foe, and again the flashes of the broadsides illuminated the sea, while those on board the Sea-Sliper gazed on with far differing feelings, for those rescued from the Englishman hoped success would light on their flag, and that had formed the crew and passengers of the merchantman, as well as the survivors from the brig, prayed for the stars and stripes to conquer.

Thus, one and all beheld the grand but terrible sight, and awaited with stilled hearts the issue, that would bring joy or despair to either English or Americans.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 276.)

Tiger Dick: OR, THE CASHIER'S CRIME.

A TALE OF MAN'S HATE AND WOMAN'S FAITH.

BY PHILIP S. WARNE.

CHAPTER XXIV—CONTINUED.

It was a sad spectacle that met the ruffian McFarland's eye; one that should have moved his heart to pity, but it did not. With his head on a knoll of turf and his pale, emaciated face half covered by his hat, lay Fred, in the sleep of exhaustion. His breathing was heavy and unnatural. Ever and anon he started, and a look of pain or terror crossed his face. Then he would half spring up clutching with his hands and giving utterance to some half-articulate exclamation. A piteous scene, surely; but McFarland had sold his services for money, and he would not now be diverted from the accomplishment of his work.

"Shall we prod him as he sleeps?" he asked of his companion in crime, shrinking with a superstitious dread from such a deed.

"Sure, what difference will it make w' him I dunno?" asked O'Toole.

"Stick him himself," said McFarland, step ping aside.

As he did so, he tripped on a twig, and the snapping sound awoke the sleeper. Like a startled stag he leaped to his feet, then stood a moment in bewilderment. His sudden move ment startled the would-be-murderers, and they leaped back. The next instant Fred broke and ran with all his might.

"After him, or he'll git away!" cried McFar land.

"Howly Moses! Shoot the devil!" yelled O'Toole.

McFarland acted upon the suggestion and fired. Fred swerved from his course, clutched at a tree, and then turned at bay. In an instant his pistol covered O'Toole, who was aiming at him. There was a double report.

"Oh, swate Virgin, I'm shot!" yelled O'Toole, sinking to the ground, his face livid with cowardly fear.

McFarland leaped behind a tree, showing the craven in his trembling knees and chattering teeth.

But his fears were groundless. Fred Powell staggered a step forward, and then fell upon his face.

"Murther the devil, he's give me me lashin' sickness," moaned O'Toole, in a fainting voice.

McFarland drew his knife, and leaped upon the prostrate Fred. But it was needless. He lay upon his side, with his head resting on his arm as in slumber. But the eyes were glazed that looked from the half-closed lids, and his blood dyed the green sward red with its crimson tide.

Banded as a felon; outlawed, with a price on his head; hunted to earth like a wild beast; at last falling beneath the murderous hand of his foes; what could more the vengeance of Cecil Beaumont have craved?

PART III. WHEN ROGUES FALL OUT.

CHAPTER I.

A NEW HAND IN THE GAME.

THEY were a sad household at Mr. Powell's the morning following Fred's peril and escape. The banker had been brought home insensible, and now lay on a bed of torture, mental and physical. In her darkened room May, having given way to a paroxysm of wild grief, now lay in a lethargy of despair and exhaustion.

Charley Brewster called early to see if he could be of any service to the stricken house hold. He sent a bouquet of flowers to May's room, and then went to her father.

Mr. Powell listened to the story of his son's rescue with tears in his eyes.

"God bless the noble girl!" he said. "She deserves a happier fate."

Then Charley went to the inquest, which was appointed at nine.

Nothing is so remarkable as the usual scant loss of life in a Western "free fight," where revolvers and bowie-knives are in every man's hand. Of all engaged in the *mélée* at Dead Man's Bluff only one was fatally wounded, and he an honest laboring man who stood in the outskirts of the crowd, taking no active part in the fray. As is usually the case, he left a large family, made destitute, by his death, of all means of support. Some two or three scores bore off remembrances of their participation, ranging from a black eye to a nose bitten off, and from a prod with a bowie-knife to a bullet-shattered shoulder. But they philosophically regarded it as all in a lifetime, and patiently nursed their hurts for another set-to. Half a dozen of the ring-leaders were arrested and lodged in jail, and the rest went about their usual vocations.

That afternoon Cecil Beaumont was buried; a reward for the apprehension of Frederick Powell was posted all over the country; the newspapers gave a highly-wrought account of the affair, with sensational headlines in which "the lovely and accomplished Miss Goldthorp" was spoken of as a Joan of Arc; the newsboys bawled excitedly and honest people read calmly, and the world jogged on very much as before, for those not immediately interested.

The injury to policeman Croghan proving only slight, Tiger Dick was let off with a trifling fine. That evening a note was placed in his hand. He read it; looked puzzled; read it again, and burst into a prolonged guffaw.

"Ha! ha! ha! ho! ho! ho! Oh, he'll do to travel, he will!"

Then he read the letter again, carefully noting the plan of action sketched out.

"Ha! ha! ha! A game is never done until the last hand is played. By Jove! this is the neatest lay yet. I thought they had the dead wood on us, when I saw the coroner sitting on that carcass; but the Prince is like Samson—his death was the ten-strike of his worthless life. He! he! he! We've got 'em, body and breeches, this time, and no mistake."

Then he touched a bell, and sent for Shadwell Jim and the rest of his crew, and was in counsel with them for a long time.

Several days now passed, without any incident worthy of note. Florence recovered so as not to be confined to her bed; but she went about the house sad-eyed and dejected. As for May, she seemed brokenhearted, and lay upon her pillow as wan as a broken lily. Mr. Powell managed to drag himself to his place of business, and with the help of Mr. Carrington finally got things in running order again. Then he went home utterly prostrated. All the time Charley Brewster was of invaluable service, and smoothed over many a rough spot by his thoughtfulness and consideration.

One evening a stranger came to town, and having secured lodgings in an unpretentious quarter, began to lounge about like a man who had nothing particularly on his hands. He gave direction to the conversation in an aimless way, here and there asking a question. As he was a good listener, he picked up quite a deal of information about all the parties concerned in the late stirring events.

He went to "The Jungle," and while risking small sums in the game, watched the Tiger furtively. Tiger Dick noticed that he was a stranger; but seeing nothing unusual about him, gave him no further thought.

He then made the acquaintance of Mrs. McPherson, and, representing himself as an old friend of Mr. Beaumont, drew from that unsuspecting lady all that she knew about her dead boarder. Mrs. McPherson was very partisan; and as he seemed such a pleasant-spoken gentleman, and so warmly interested in everything that concerned Cecil, she confided to him the (from her point of view) heartless treatment Cecil had received at the hands of Florence Goldthorp; his distress of mind, as indicated by his ravings; his murder by her lover, his rival; her attempt to secure Fred from arrest; her rescue of him from the mob; and finally her connivance at his escape, to which the act and wealth and position of her uncle gave immunity.

From Mrs. McPherson the unknown went to Florence's uncle. That gentleman was annoyed beyond expression at the public scandal in which his niece had involved herself. He drugs Mr. Powell, and induces him to gamble at Tiger Dick's table. A lucky accident sends Mr. Powell senior to Beaumont. He takes advantage of it to blast the character of the son. On the evening of the robbery, Saunderson again drugs Mr. Powell. What would be easier than to steal his key? Then, when the father is wavering, the forgery is brought upon the carpet, and clinches all.

"Mr. Draper, your solution is the correct one—I'll wager my life on it!"

"Well, good-by. I'm going to look for Frederick Powell, and get his story."

"But if you find him, will it not be your duty to give him up, for the murder of Cecil?" asked Brewster, with sudden pallor.

The look of perplexity returned to Mr. Draper's face.

"Leave me to take care of that," he said.

"By the way, where did Miss Goldthorp take leave of Mr. Powell on the night of his escape?"

"At a place called Griggs' Hollow, eight or ten miles up the river, in a bridle path leading off the road."

"Thank you. And now, good-by."

CHAPTER II.

A SNAKE.

It was with a strange blending of pleasure and pain that Charley Brewster went to see Florence Goldthorp on the morning following the disinterment of Cecil Beaumont. He found her in excitement over her interview with Mr. Draper. She felt an undefined expectancy; of what, she scarcely knew.

"Oh, Mr. Brewster," she said, eagerly, "you have seen Mr. Draper. What is the result? What has he accomplished?"

"I am not wholly received into his confidence yet; but I infer that Cecil Beaumont has been guilty of some great crime, at some time in his past life, and that Mr. Draper is a detective in pursuit of him and some other person or persons."

"And if he proves to be a villain, it will all be favorable to Frederick!" cried Florence, with clasped hands.

"Yes. Mr. Draper is already satisfied of the existence of a conspiracy against Frederick between Cecil, Tiger Dick and Saunderson."

"Did he say so?" asked Florence, eagerly.

"Yes."

"And what evidence has he?"

"He gained Billy's confidence, got him intoxicated, and drew from him the fact that he had drugged Frederick's wine—"

"Drugged it? Oh, I knew it! Dear Fred! I knew that he was not the dissipated wretch they tried to prove him."

"It was at the instigation of Tiger Dick, and getting him to gamble was part of the plot."

"Oh, the villains! And of course Tiger Dick was only the tool of Cecil Beaumont, the arch-hypocrite! He could have no interest of his own in ruining Fred."

"Mr. Draper is of opinion that Fred's key was stolen from him by Saunderson, and thus came into the hands of Tiger Dick."

"Oh, how blind they were not to see it! And yet—!" with a sudden spasm of pain—

"Mr. Carrington said that when asked for his key, Fred at first grew violent and resorted to equivocation, and then said that he had lost it. Why did he not say so at the beginning?"

"May he not have learned the suspicion resting against some one; and having lost his keys, at first have been afraid to acknowledge it?"

"It must be that. But what a fatal mistake! Poor Fred! he was surrounded on every side. But the forgery—did he gain any further light on that?"

"Only as far as we got—the absence of motive, and the probability of its being a part of the existing plot."

"Oh, we should have cleared him completely. Why was he fated to commit that one fatal act!"

She buried her face in her hands and wept afresh.

"It was done in the heat of passion; and the attendant circumstances will so far extenuate the case, that I do not believe that a jury can be impaneled that will make it a case of the first degree."

"But he must never be taken. It was but a just punishment for Cecil Beaumont's crimes. And Frederick would die in prison."

An angry flush mingled with her grief. Suddenly a thought lighted her face with something like hope.

"Mr. Brewster," she said, "they were fighting; might not Fred have killed him in self-defense?"

"It would be hard to satisfy a jury of it," Charley replied, thinking of the mutilation of the corpse, which would go against Fred.

Then telling her of the movements of Mr. Draper in search of Fred, Charley took his departure, leaving her weeping over the cruel fate that had defeated all their efforts by staining the hands of her lover with blood.

On the following day, as the sun was slowly passing down the western sky, Florence went out for her usual afternoon ride. She had neared the spot where she had last seen Fred, previous to his rescue from the mob, when she was met by a man who had the appearance of a farm-hand.

Without taking the coffin from the grave, the lid was removed and a dark lantern turned upon the face of the dead. As Charley had said, Cecil Beaumont was plainly recognizable, despite the mutilation of the features.

When Mr. Draper first looked upon the dead he gave a violent start and turned pale. Then took the lantern in his own hand, and stooping down, lifted the hair from the left temple with trembling fingers. Among the roots a scar was discernible.

"Great Heaven! it is he!" he exclaimed; and then checking himself, got up out of the grave and intimated that he was satisfied.

There was a strange look upon his face,

which Charley Brewster conceived to be a blending of regret, bewilderment and uncertainty, though what could give rise to these emotions he could not imagine.

Mr. Draper rode back to the city in perfect silence. What was the nature of his thoughts Charley could not divine. His face was perfectly impassible. When they parted, he took Charley's hand and said:

"Mr. Brewster, you may rest assured of these facts. On the two occasions when Mr. Powell was intoxicated, it was under the influence of drugs. He gambled when his brain was on fire with this influence, and only then. I am morally certain, although the absolute proof is not yet at my command, that he did not commit the forgery alleged against him, nor had he anything to do with the robbery of the bank. Miss Goldthorp has proved herself a woman of good sense. You may repeat to her what I have just told you as soon as you like. Only join upon her the importance of perfect secrecy in the matter for the present. I allow you to tell her, for the satisfaction it may be to her to know that she is not alone in her confidence in Mr. Powell."

"And you believe that this is all a plot of Cecil Beaumont?"

"Here's the way it looks to me: Billy Saunderson confesses himself to be acting in the capacity of 'decoy duck' for Tiger Dick. He drags Mr. Powell, and induces him to gamble at Tiger Dick's table. A lucky accident sends Mr. Powell senior to Beaumont. He takes advantage of it to blast the character of the son. On the evening of the robbery, Saunderson again drugs Mr. Powell. What would be easier than to steal his key? Then, when the father is wavering, the forgery is brought upon the carpet, and clinches all."

"And shall you see him again? Were you to take an answer to him?"

"He didn't say nothin' about no answer, only I was to git' you the letter, unbeknownst to anybody."

"Wait a moment, until I read it."

It was written in lead-pencil, and read:

"Florence, meet me to-night at twelve where I last saw you. FRED."

With a wild pulsing of the heart, Florence drew forth her purse and tendered some money to the bearer of the missive which she held in her hand. He took it with an awkward bow of acknowledgment and a "Thank'ee, ma'am!" and shambled off down the road.

Then Florence turned her horse's head homeward and rode like the wind; but his swift dash could not keep pace with her impetuosity.

Locked in her room, she read the note again and again, pressing it to her lips and heart.

"Oh, my darling!" she whispered, "why does he not fly? Why does he linger where accident may at any moment betray him into the hands of his enemies?"

It seemed as if the sun would never set; and when at last it sunk below the horizon, she set herself to watch the slow-moving hands of the clock. Sitting in her darkened room, she listened to the noises in the house. Would they never cease? Would the servants never go to bed?

One by one the lights went out, and gradually the house sunk to repose. Then a feeling of awful desolation crept over her. A thousand fears racked her bosom, as she counted the seconds until eleven o'clock.

Then she rose, and stole noiselessly down the stairs and into the yard. She had no difficulty in saddling a palfrey which usually served her. She did not need Duke for her present errand.

With tremblings lest her horse should neigh so as to awaken the hostler, she led him from the stable and out of the gate. Then she mounted, and rode away, at first at a walk, but when beyond earshot from the house, at an ever-quickenning gallop.

Eight miles from home she came to a point where the road descended into a dark glade, hedged about by the trees that interlaced their boughs above the way. Here she dismounted and tied her horse just off the road.

Then, with trembling limbs and quick-beating heart, she ran down a bridle-path at right angles.

Half a dozen rods from the road she paused in expectancy. Then she descried a form that took a step away in her shadows.

With a glad cry she sprung forward, and threw herself into his arms.

"Fred! oh, Fred! how glad I—"

She felt his arms close about her; she felt his breath on her cheek; then, with a wild scream, she struggled violently to free herself, and failing, fainted dead away.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 271.)

"Who gave this to you?" she asked, breathlessly.

"Dunno his name. Never see'd him afore. He git' me a dollar, an'

HER HAND.

BY JOE JOT, JR.

I.
They sat within the parlor's light,
A silence fell on each
That wove a mystic, wondrous spell
Too infinite for speech.
Her eyes were deepest, meek and mild,
Her face was maiden sweet;
At last he broke the stillness there,
And knelt beside her feet.

II.
He cried, "Gems gathered from their shrine
Lie here in the soft green sea,
Rich ores from the dark mountain mine,
I give not these to thee;
I offer thee a trusting love,
Whose brightness shines more grand,
And ask thee in return, fair girl,
To give to me thy hand."

III.
A brightness lit the maiden's face,
And kindled in her eyes,
And softly sighing she arose:
"I bid thee to arise,
And take, oh, take my hand," she cried,
And closed the door.
Out of there that young man went,
And asked her hand no more.

LEAVES
From an Actor's Life :

Recollections of Plays and Players.

BY GEO. L. AIKEN.

VI.—Wood, the *Utility Man*, excites the wrath of the Great American Tragedian—A Peculiarity of Irish Actors—Mulligan's Blunders—Forrest's Moodiness—Macbeth and Seton—Eberle, the Comedian—Badenough—A Strong Situation—The Comedian revenges himself on the Star.

THEIR was a man who called himself Wood, attached to the Tremont Theater company as "Utility Man"—his vocation being to represent the subordinate parts in the plays, such as servants, countrymen, 1st robbers, and the like. I say he called himself Wood, but his right name was Mulligan. He thought, probably, that Wood would look better printed on the bills than Mulligan.

And here I cannot refrain from remarking that the majority of actors upon the American Stage of Irish birth or extraction, adopt a professional name that has no Irish sound to it. What the cause of this may be, I am at a loss to determine, but it has always appeared to me that they were either ashamed of their true names or of the profession they had adopted. Nor is this practice confined to the Irish actors alone—though it prevails among them to a greater extent than any other nationality; English and American actors do the same; but, where an Irish O'Brien, Flaherty, Connolly, Cooke or Mulcahy, will assume such plain names as Bryant, Raymond, Williams and Clarke, nothing less than De Vere, De Lacy, Montgomery and Heartwell contents the others.

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Mulligan had adopted the profession from pure love, and with that high ambition surging in his breast, which has filled the breasts of so many histrionic aspirants. He was determined to achieve greatness. He was not particular what salary, or remuneration, he received, so long as he was permitted to act, although the characters intrusted to him were not of any importance.

As he had wealthy parents, who were willing that he should pursue the bent of his desires, being, probably, impressed by his sanguine hopes of future eminence upon the stage, he could afford to act cheap; and as managers were as speculative then as they are now, he contrived to get a situation and keep it, while practised actors, who demanded better wages, were refused engagements.

This Wood was a terrible infliction to the stars, for he generally bungled what little he had to do, and this led to a play upon his right name by Charles Mizzy, for his true name was no mystery in the theater.

"What's the matter with Wood to-night?" inquired one of the actors, after one of his usual blunders.

"Oh! he's made a *Mull* again," replied Muzzy.

After this Wood was generally addressed as "Mull." As I have said, he was a great annoyance to Forrest, who could scarcely tolerate him in any of his plays, and whenever he saw him come upon the stage at rehearsal, would "growl like a bear with a sore head."

Forrest was an inveterate growler. With all his success in life, he was an unhappy man. There was too much vinegar in his disposition. He could not brook a rival. He wished to be the great I Am, and his jealousy of Macready led to the celebrated Astor Place riot, in New York. He always disclaimed any share in this; but his partisans knew his feelings toward Macready, and that was a sufficient inducement for them to take up the cudgels in his behalf.

This riot does not come within my province now, as it happened years afterward. I may have occasion to refer to it, however, in some future paper.

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"Where would he be without his figure?" he would say. "He's all brown without any brains! Ah! if I only had his figure with my talent, I'd show him how to act!"

One night, when the act-drop descended on the fourth act of Macbeth, Forrest was furious. Wood was the Seton—a character that has a number of important messages to deliver. Wood had bungled, as usual. Forrest raved about the stage, like an enraged lion, seeking for Wood, and I have no doubt he would have "devoured" him if he could have found him. But Wood had disappeared with

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After fuming for a short time and finding that the object of his wrath was not forthcoming, Forrest retired to his dressing-room. The moment he left the stage Wood sneaked out from between two scenes at the back of the stage, where he had hidden himself.

"Holloa, Wood! Forrest wants to see you," said Eberle, one of the comedians of the theater.

Wood put on a swaggering tone as he answered:

"I heard him, the big brute—but I didn't want any fuss with him. He's only mad because the people won't come to see him play Macbeth. But I'll fix him yet."

Eberle laughed, replying: "Wait until his last night, and then we'll get square on him."

They did; but it was Eberle's doing. I remember him as a small-sized man, with a sharp face, and twinkling, roguish eyes. He was what is called a dry joker. He was constantly making fun for his brother professionals.

He was cast for a character called Badenough in Metamora, which did not come properly within his line, as it was not a comedy part, but he was put in to "strengthen the cast"—and he did not like it; nor did Forrest.

"Does he play Badenough?" inquired the great tragedian, as he saw him appear to rehearse that character. "Bad enough he'll play it," he added, with a grim facetiousness.

Forrest's jokes were as ponderous as himself. Eberle heard the remark and smiled, and nudged Wood, who stood beside him. "Just you wait!" he whispered; and Wood expressed a willingness to do so.

Eberle and Wood represented two emissaries who had come from England to the New World in search of one of the regicide judges of Charles I., who had taken refuge in New England.

In one of their rambles in the forest—the business in the play is to prowl about generally—they encounter Nameokee, the wife of Metamora, and, following the plan which seems to have been adopted by the English toward the Indians, in those days, they immediately begin to maltreat her. Summoned by her cries, Metamora rushes on to her assistance. The two soldiers recoil, and Metamora, pointing his rifle at them, demands: "Which of you has lived too long?"

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